

99. *Recovery from taking two drachms of Arsenic.*—Mr. Toocoon relates the following example of this. W. R. aged 17, swallowed two drachms of arsenic, which he coarsely bruised with the end of a bottle at nine, P. M., on the 2d of June, 1817, with a view to self-destruction. He repented, and made it known a quarter of an hour afterwards. Six grains of emetic tartar were immediately given and quickly repeated. Vomiting was soon excited, and briskly kept up, by copious draughts of warm water for two hours. Nothing was retained on the stomach during the night, and he complained of constant and severe pain in the stomach and bowels. He passed the night without rest, and on the following morning he complained still of great pain in his stomach and bowels, was very hot, with a frequent pulse and flushed countenance. He was copiously bled, and his bowels were relieved by injections, but nothing could be retained on the stomach until the evening after the application of a blister. Effervescing medicines, with opium, were then kept with difficulty, but he was not so much relieved until the fourth to make his recovery certain.—*Prov. Med. and Surg. Journ.* January 1, 1842.

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#### MISCELLANEOUS.

100. *Animal Magnetism.*—After an interesting and judicious paper read to the Westminster Medical Society, by Mr. Longmore, condemnatory of animal magnetism, the discussion was much enlivened by the practical exhibition of the mesmeric treatment upon a susceptible subject, one of the members of the society, who was well known, and beyond suspicion. The subject of the experiment was a young gentleman of about nineteen years of age, of the sanguine-nervous temperament, robust, and healthy. Having taken a seat at the table, the chairman entered into conversation with him, obviously for the purpose of removing any agitation that might exist, that the experiment might be fairly conducted. The society was informed that one of the peculiar features of this case was the power the individual possessed of inducing upon himself the “*crisis*,” or the “*mesmeric sleep*,” without manipulation, or the intervention of a second party. Having taken his seat in the area, he showed the society how he could induce the “*crisis*.” He held a pen towards the point of his nose, and fixed his eyes (which necessarily squinted a little) upon the pen, but his *finger* he said would do equally well. Having continued steadfastly gazing, as it were, at the point of his nose for about forty or fifty seconds, he fell back upon the chair in a fit similar to that of epilepsy, with this difference, that the muscles of his face were not distorted, nor was there any foaming at the mouth. The muscles of the trunk and limbs were, however, rigid; his pulse quick and irregular; the pupils dilated, and the tips of his fingers ice-cold. When an arm or leg was raised, it remained out-stretched and rigid in the position in which it was placed, as in catalepsy. While sitting on the chair with his head much drawn backwards over the back of the chair, first, one arm was raised by an assistant evidently with some difficulty from the rigidity of the muscles, till the limb was at right angles with the trunk, when it remained fixed in that position. The other arm was then raised in a similar manner, and left fixed at a similar angle. It was proposed then to try the effects of lifting the legs. While the young man was still sitting with his arms projecting forwards at right angles, one foot was first raised till the whole lower limb projected forwards upon a level with the seat of the chair; the other foot was then treated in a similar manner, and the four limbs left in these awkward positions for a much longer period than could be maintained by any voluntary effort. He was aroused after some minutes by a smart stroke upon one of the outstretched limbs, and appeared much confused and bewildered, but soon regained his usual appearance. Soon afterwards the chairman tried upon him the usual manipulations, but with the *backs* of the *hands* instead of the *palms*; a process which is said to be entirely useless, or inadequate to produce, according to the adepts, any mesmeric effects what-

ever. While these passes were being made, the chairman inquired how the young man felt; and he replied, that he had a sensation as if electricity was passing through him. The chairman then pointing with his forefinger to the forehead of the young man, requested him to look steadfastly at his (the chairman's) finger, which he did, and in less than a minute he dropped in a "*crisis*." The rigidity of the muscles was as great as in the former experiment, and no doubt could be entertained that the young man was totally insensible to all that was passing around him. This was proved to the satisfaction of the society by various experiments upon the skin and upon the eye. After numerous trials of the state of his sensibility, the young man was lifted and placed erect upon his feet, and held in that position for some time, every muscle being apparently in a rigid state of contraction. After remaining for some minutes in this cataleptic state, he was roused as before by a smart blow upon the arm; and though standing still upon his feet, he appeared when thus struck to be aroused from a deep sleep, and seemed at first amazed at what was going on around him.

The chairman having been requested by the society for an explanation of the phenomena just witnessed, said, although he doubted whether a satisfactory answer could be given, it was to him perfectly obvious that the phenomena were not attributable to any new agency developed and introduced into the system of the young man, for the fit could obviously be induced by the young man himself more quickly than by the agency of another. Whatever might be the cause of the fit, it could not possibly be attributable to animal magnetism, or to any extrinsic cause. According to the chairman it depended upon a peculiar state or idiosyncrasy of the nervous system—the epileptic,—which might be called into activity by various causes, as mental emotion, imagination, a habit of recurrence by the induction of some of the *precursory* movements of epilepsy, or even by inducing a peculiar state of a single nerve. The chairman was inclined to attribute the phenomena in the case before the society to the last of these causes. A peculiar impression was first induced on the optic nerves of the young man, by the fixing steadily, and for some time, the eyes upon a given point: a state similar to that induced by pressure upon the nerves of a limb when a numbness or "sleeping" of the limb occurs. The state of the optic nerve thus induced, he conceived, was transmitted, by continuous sympathy, to the brain and whole nervous system, with its necessary effects upon consciousness and the motive and sensitive powers.

The subject excited considerable discussion, and the majority of the speakers concurred with the essayist in the views he supported in opposition to animal magnetism.—*Lancet*, 1842.

101. *Abstract of a paper on Opium smoking in China.* By G. H. SMITH, Esq., Surgeon in Penang. Communicated to Dr. Johnson by the author.—The great extent to which this destructive vice is carried on in this island, and in the straits and islands adjacent, together with the almost utter impossibility of relinquishing the dreadful habit, when once acquired, opens an immense source of revenue to the East India Company, who monopolize the sale of all quantities of opium under a chest, as well as that of arrack, serree, toddy, bang, &c. The annual average revenue of this monopoly, or "*Revenue-Farms*," as they are called, for ten years past, has amounted to 4822*l.* sterling. But the quantity of opium smuggled is immense and incalculable. Benares opium is that chiefly used by the farmer for the preparation of "*chandoo*" (the composition smoked), on account of its weight and cheapness; but the consumers prefer the Patna opium, because it has a finer flavour, is stronger, and its effects more lasting.

The following is part of the mode of preparing the chandoo. Two balls are as much as one man can properly prepare at once. The soft inside part of the opium-ball is scooped out, and the rind is boiled in soft water, and strained through a piece of calico. The liquor is evaporated in a wide vessel, and all impurities carefully skimmed off, as they rise to the surface. The same process is gone through with the soft opium extracted from the ball; and all being mixed and evaporated to the consistence of dough, it is spread out into thin plates, and